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REMARKS

Claims 23-50 are pending in this Application. By this Amendment, claims 23 and 38-41 have been amended, and claims 26, 28, 30, 31 and 46-50 have been canceled. Claim 23 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 30, as indicated by Examiner's conditional allowance of claims 30 and 31. Claims 51-56 have been added, wherein claim 51 includes the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 31. Therefore, claims 23-25, 27, 29, 32-45 and 51-56 are at issue in this Application.

I. Allowable & Amended Claims

On page eleven of the Office Action, Examiner indicated that dependent claims 30 and 31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Consistent with the Examiner's indication, Applicants have amended independent claim 23 to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 30. Also, Applicants have canceled dependent claim 30 and the intervening claim (claim 26), and amended dependent claims 38-41 to depend from claim 23. Consequently, claims 23-25, 27, 29, and 32-45 are allowable according to the Examiner's indications.

Similarly, Applicants have added independent claim 51 which includes all limitations of allowable dependent claim 31. Applicants thereby canceled claim 31 and the intervening claim (claim 28). Further, Applicants added claims 52-56 which depend from independent claim 51, where these dependent claims generally correspond to certain claims depending from amended and allowable independent claim 23. Therefore, claims 51-56 do not raise new matter and are in condition for allowance.

II. Obviousness Rejections

Due to amendment of claims 23 and 38-41, and the cancellation of claims 26, 28, 30, 31 and 46-50, the Section 103 Obviousness rejections of pending claims 23-25, 27, 29, 32-45, and 51-56 are rendered moot.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that claims 23-25, 27, 29, 32-45 and 51-56 are in a condition for allowance, and respectfully requests early notice of same. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned attorney if the Examiner has any questions concerning this Response, or if it will expedite the progress of this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this document is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office, to the attention of Examiner Charles D. Garber, Art Unit No. 2856, to Fax No. 703/872-9306 on May 24, 2004.

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